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THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Bradley Traynor
on News
John Townsend
on Arts



GET OUTTA
TOWN TO
Manchester,
England

DANIEL BOYER

2010 PERSON OF THE YEAR



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Daniel Boyer. Photo by Sophia Hantzes

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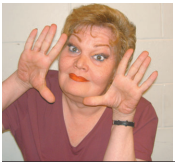
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The Truth According to...Whom?"



"And, ultimately, same sex-marriage is not true."

That "not true" has been nagging at my mind since I quoted it in my last column. Brian Brown of the antigay National Organization of Marriage (NOM) uttered those words.

Nothing is "not true" about two people wanting to join together as a family.

Does Brown consider the marriages of little girls sold by their impoverished parents to older men to be "true"?

Probably not, even in Brown's cosmology, but if pushed, his answer summarily would be reduced to this tautology: "My definition of marriage is true."

Over the last couple of weeks, in my reading, I've run across several historical examples of the same reasoning used by the wealthy and powerful to minimize and subdue others.

Lyndall Gordon's *Lives Like Loaded Guns*, which explores the dysfunctional, litigious family of poet Emily Dickinson (1830-89), is one example.

In *Letters to a Young Lady*, Reverend John Bennett admonished Dickinson: "A passion for poetry is dangerous for a woman."

Dickinson's friend, publisher Josiah Gilbert Holland, posited, "The genuine classics of every language [are] the work of men and not of women. ...women could not create 'the permanent treasures of literature.'"

The poetess, thus circumscribed, was both an invalid *and* invalid.

I also read that Mary Dyer was hanged in Boston in 1660 for refusing to acknowledge the "true" religion. She held Quaker beliefs, which the Puritans, who themselves had fled religious intolerance in England, could not tolerate.

Brown believes: "If gay marriage is allowed, then the state is essentially saying that my views on marriage...are equivalent to discrimination...."

Similarly, the Puritans thought: "If there be Quakers, Congregationalists are devalued."

What the Puritans—like Brown, like 19th-Century publishers, like many others—used as a strategy was preemptive devaluation. Invalidate the seekers, render them nugatory, and fortify the power of your own beliefs at their diminished expense.

It is imperative to examine the words of the world's Browns. Invalidation is a psychological and sociological "sending to Coventry" that can be used to deny the existing rights enjoyed by other Americans. It opens the door to legislation that would withdraw rights their target already possesses.

In knowledge is strength—and a warning that our arguments must be crafted and executed as carefully as Brown's already are.
E.B. BOATNER

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A Wanda Wisdom Christmas Carol

Just as Santa straps the last sack of toys onto his sleigh, your favorite podcasting drag queen will be delivering an entirely different gift to the world. During the week of Christmas, Wanda Wisdom and her hardworking, creative posse of off-kilter elves will bring *A Wanda Wisdom Christmas Carol* to friends and fans across the globe.

This all-new film tells Dickens's classic, timeworn tale of personal redemption and the Christmas spirit with a sassy, snarky send-up only Wanda Wisdom can deliver. Celebrity guest stars include Madge Weinstein of YeastRadio.com; Dame Vesta Bules all the way from London; and the delicious Diva Doug Melroe from the Firm.

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story of a big-haired Wanda Wisdom who has gotten just a bit too big for her polyester britches. After a rude wake-up call from her much-loved, albeit completely crazy, Aunt Carol, Wanda is whisked away on a journey of self-reflection—and, let's hope, self-discovery and ultimately redemption.

You may think you know the Dickens classic like the back of your hand, but we guarantee you never have heard it quite told in such a delicious, wack-a-doodle way.

Hold on to your holiday hats, and prepare for a thrilling ride through time and space with America's favorite drag queen. Simply click on <<http://wandawisdom.com>> during the week of Christmas to enjoy a whole new holiday tradition with friends and family.



Greg Eiss

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Open Letter to the Minnesota GLBT Community

Next year, the Republicans will have a majority in both the Minnesota House and Senate. Unless the Log Cabin Republicans have some legislative allies that are also willing to stand up against their base, we should expect that two years from now, a state constitutional amendment prohibiting same-sex marriage and/or its legal equivalent(s) will be on the ballot.



Historically, constitutional amendments have been taken up in the second session of the Legislature. I hope OutFront Minnesota will not wait until the spring of 2012 to organize a campaign. We either come together to persuade voters now, or we might as well just throw in the towel. I believe we will need two years to door-knock/phone-bank the entire state of registered voters, along with an enormous amount of money. The National Organization for Marriage (NOM) has unlimited financial resources to lie about our lives. But our strengths are our diversity and allies.

The LGBT community needs to rise up, and tell OutFront

to start a campaign now with a focus that moves us all in a systematic yet comprehensive direction. I also challenge people to pledge to go back to their hometowns, and help out. No Minnesotan should be able to go to the polls in 2012 saying they never received a phone call, a knock on the door, or a piece of literature encouraging them to vote *no* on the amendment.

From Pipestone to Grand Marais, from Hallock to Caledonia, we need to identify voters, and get them to the polls—the basic ABCs of a successful campaign. Unfortunately, there will be competition for volunteers from the US Senate and Presidential races. We have a steep hill to climb, and the clock is ticking. We need to start now!

PAUL FRANCIS FLEECE

Amazing Song and Music Video for the Gay Community

I've never written to you before, but I thought it was time I did. I love your site—this is why I want to share with you an amazing song and music video, which is buzzing right now. The song is "Love is Love," by Jay Jacobson. It's really fantastic,

but what really got me was its message: equality in love for the gay community. I found the lyrics on the artist's website (see below).

I can't think of anything more relevant for our community right now. The music video is beginning to get coverage even on mainstream media like *USA Today*: <<http://content.usatoday.com/topics/article/Culture/Computers+and+Internet/YouTube/09LL0u8fZ79st/1>>. See this link: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D60PROfWm-g>>.

I thought your readers would really like it. I shared it with all my friends, and they all did.

IGNACIO DARNAUDE

Love is Love

by Jay Jacobson

© Jay Jacobson

Mother wants me to be happy
Find someone nice and be loved
Father says that to be happy
Find someone nice you can love
I did as they said and I'm happy
Why are they so sad I found love?

I thought they would be oh so happy
But they're blinded by lies from above

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I am in love and he loves me
Together we both are happy
How can you ever disagree
True love has no boundaries
Love is love (no matter who gets or who gives it). Love is love (no matter who gets or who gives it). Love is love (no matter who gets or who gives it). Love is love (no matter who

gets or who gives it's love... it's love)

Friends say I've made all wrong choices
Tell me how love has its rules
Come from church with righteous choices
And no patience for different rules
What about how they are choosing
To ignore the golden rule?
My heart knows it's truth that it's choosing. Abide by them and I play the fool

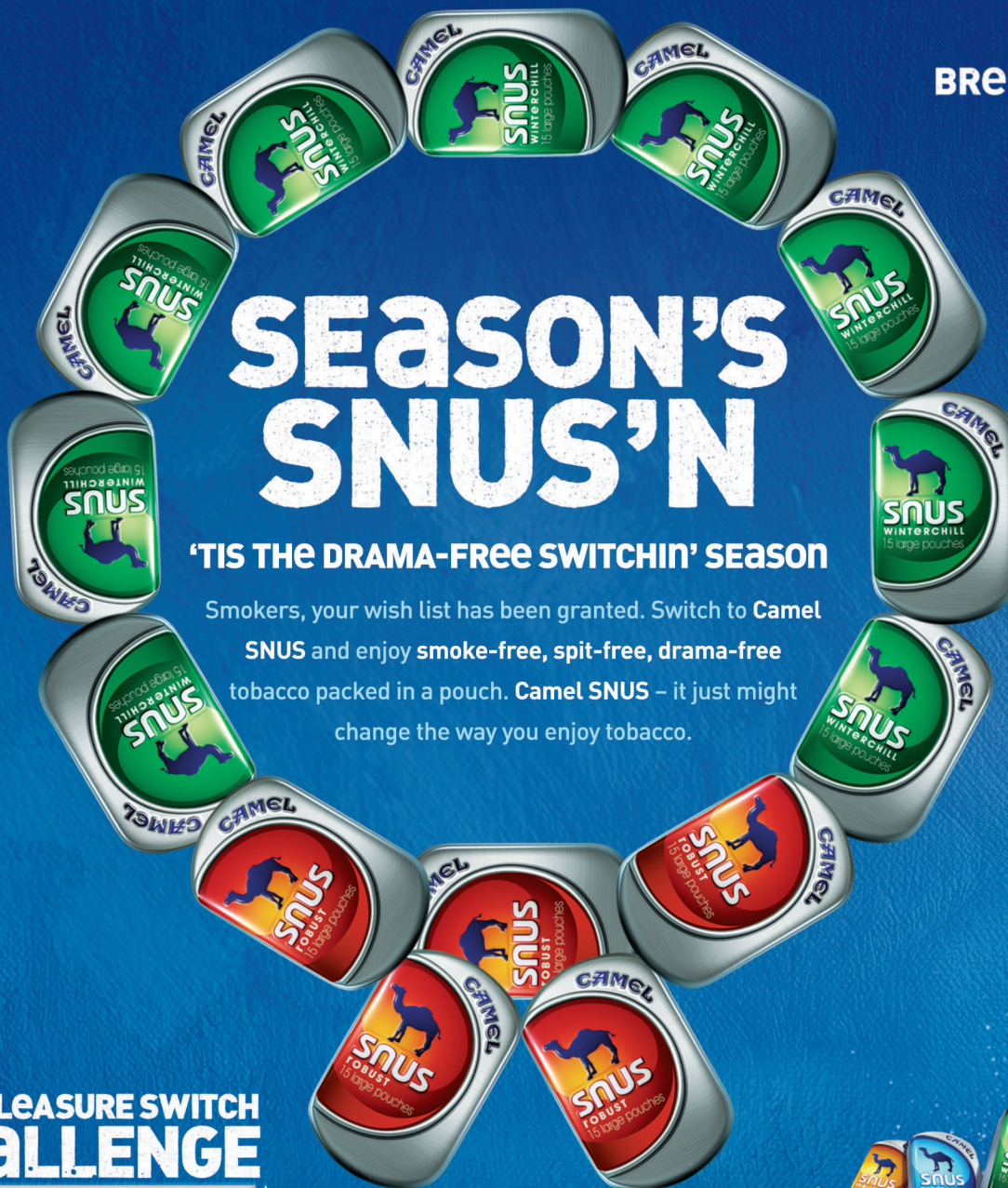
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BRIDGE

End this stupid game
We are all the same
We all need love

CHORUS

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Minnesota Freedom Band Marches in Holidazzle Parade



CONTINUING A longtime tradition, the Minnesota Freedom Band has been marching in the Holidazzle Parade on Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis again this year. Now in its 19th year, the event got under way November 26, and continues through December 19.

Photo by Sophia Hantzes



Minnesota AIDS Project Observes World AIDS Day



THE MINNESOTA AIDS Project (MAP) observed World AIDS Day on December 1 at the Mall of America Best Buy Rotunda in Bloomington. Jason Matheson hosted the gathering, which featured addresses by MAP Executive Director Lorraine Teel and others on HIV prevention.

(From left) Minnesota AIDS Project Board Chair Patrick Troska; Mr. Minnesota, Toany Le; Minnesota AIDS Project Executive Director Lorraine Teel; host Jason Matheson; PrideAlive volunteer Bobbi Gass. Photo by Sophia Hantzes

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DANIEL BOYER

PERSON OF THE YEAR

Daniel Lee (Danny) Boyer embodied everything one could wish for in a “Person of the Year.” He passionately and generously was committed to his work and his community. His unexpected passing on June 15 at the age of 56 left a void in the lives of his family, coworkers, and friends—a circle, it seems, that included everyone who met him.

Boyer worked for 10 years as a financial adviser for Ameriprise Financial, all the while volunteering for myriad local organizations. People today still speak fondly of his open loving spirit, enduring selflessness, and infectious laugh.

While Boyer’s life exemplifies the “It Gets Better” promise, it was not always easy for a gay youth and man, the third of four siblings, growing up in a small Michigan town.

In a 2008 *Lavender* interview, Boyer told writer Terrance Griep, “I didn’t come out till I was in my early 30s. Having been raised Catholic, and the culture I grew up in, the environment was not supportive of anyone gay or lesbian....In fact, it would have been dangerous to come out when I was in high school....I feared rejection from friends, from family, from society. I feared the idea of not being in a marriage and having children....Coming out was like a rebirth for me. It was my renaissance. It was truly amazing.”

Boyer’s sister, Mary Anne Putt, recalls, “Though I had suspected my brother was gay, hearing it was a great shock. My Dad had already died, which was better, as I really don’t know how he would have taken this news. My sister and I traveled to [Danny’s] home in Lansing within days of his telling us. I remember how calm he was, as



Photo by Sophia Hantzes

"HE WAS THE MODEL OF THE DIFFERENCE THAT A SINGLE PERSON CAN MAKE. I USED TO SAY TO DANIEL **THAT IF WE COULD MAKE 100 CLONES OF HIM, WE COULD TRANSFORM THE COMMUNITY OVERNIGHT.**"

he fielded all our questions.

"I shed many tears during that meeting, as I feared my brother would forever be rejected and belittled in society. Coming out in the '80s was a difficult time. But I gained such understanding of what it means to be gay. I asked him, 'Can you change it. Is it a choice?' And he said, 'No, why would I choose to never be able to have a traditional family with children? Why would I choose to be ridiculed by society?'"

"He went on to live his life in such a dignified manner. So many of his past, present, and future friends came to respect him for the person he was. The fact that he was a gay man did not define him. How he lived his life was what defined him from that point on."

Laura Smidzik, former Executive Director of Rainbow Families says, "I think the slogan 'works well with others' must have been created for him. Daniel was so genuine, and his values mirrored his actions. If you were an organization that received financial support from Daniel, then you probably benefited from some of his volunteer hours as well."

"Once, when he received an award, I was to introduce the next winner. Daniel made such a gracious acceptance speech. He spoke of his mother, and how influential she was in his life. He was so sincere, happy, and genuine as he spoke. He struck such a deep chord in me that as soon as I got the microphone, I said, 'Daniel, if my sons end up being even close to the man you are today, I will be so proud.'"

Boyer's mother, Margaret, was always proud of him, and in 2008,

he shared, "My Mom died this past March. My Mom had dementia and Alzheimer's disease for the last 10 years of her life. But when she was first diagnosed, she took it upon herself to write a letter to each of her children to open after she died. In my letter, she talked about how she respected the courage I've had in my life, being an out gay man. I can't even express, truly, how powerful a gift that is for me!"

Susan Cogger, PFund Director of Development and Communications, describes Boyer's bond with his mother: "Daniel had her come live with him, and brought her to events, or chose not to go if she couldn't make it. Daniel adored his mother, and was committed to her—the true measure of his humanity, his warmth, and the caring human being he was."

From the very first, Putt remembers, "The most important thing to Danny was family. No matter where he lived, he would always make the extra effort to attend all the family celebrations. He especially enjoyed his four nephews [two from each sister], and took great pains to send [each one] just the right book, as he so enjoyed reading himself."

"He continued with those same traditions with the arrival of his grandniece, Anna [Tews], and grandnephew, Dain [Putt]. When we first entered his office in Minneapolis after [his death], there were only two pictures on his desk: Anna and Dain. He had so much love to give others, and lived his life doing just that. He would have so loved to be able to have his own children." ➡

"THAT LAST CONVERSATION TOUCHED ON EVERYTHING THAT WAS IMPORTANT TO DANIEL: FRIENDS, FAMILY, VOLUNTEERISM, AND FOOD. WHAT A RICH LIFE!"

Open Arms of Minnesota Executive Director Kevin Winge notes, "The last time I saw Daniel was at a fundraiser for Open Arms a few weeks before he died. Earlier that day, he had brought his young cousin to see our new building. As he was leaving that night, he said how excited he was for her to see some of the projects he was involved with. We made plans to have lunch at a new restaurant. That last conversation touched on everything that was important to Daniel: friends, family, volunteerism, and food. What a rich life!"

Tim Marburger, Director of Fundraising and Special Events at The Aliveness Project, observes, "He was always so kind, and remembered people in many different ways. At the birth of a child, Daniel had a tree planted in their honor. Daniel had a great love of food and fellowship. His smile and distinctive laugh enriched us all.

Echoing Winge, Marburger adds, "He never did anything halfway. Daniel was everywhere in the community. If you didn't see him at a fundraiser for The Aliveness Project, or Open Arms, or the Human Rights Campaign, you would run into him at a Gay Men's Chorus concert. And when he wasn't supporting virtually every LGBT organization in town, he was out at a venue listening to music, or trying a new ethnic restaurant.

"It seemed that everyone Daniel met became a friend. He was the

model of the difference that a single person can make. I used to say to Daniel that if we could make 100 clones of him, we could transform the community overnight."

Boyer's sister, Jane Niedzielski, recollects, "Dan and I were very close growing up—something of kindred spirits, and both small for our age. Sometimes, we were mistaken for twins. As his 'twin,' I can tell you he was the better half—gentler, more thoughtful, more sensitive.

"When we were about 9 or 10, the parochial grade school we attended went on half-day sessions. Consequently, we had to empty out our desks, and carry everything home every day. Dan would frequently carry both of our book bags, even though I was older, and we were both about the same size. That's the essence of Dan, from childhood on into adulthood. He gave a lot with a truly open heart, and never expected much in return.

David Muschenheim, Boyer's close friend and coworker, also with Ameriprise Financial, reveals, "Daniel had a lot of passions. Daniel loved all kinds of food. His recipes were one of his prized possessions. Shortly after he moved to the Twin Cities, someone broke into his home, and took his recipe box. He was heartsick. Decades of accumulated recipes were stolen. He spent years rebuilding the collection, hunting down friends who may have had copies of ➤

1 Daniel Boyer and his Mom, Margaret • 2 Daniel Boyer's sisters, Jane Niedzielski and Mary Anne Putt, with his cat, Meow • 3 Daniel Boyer with his grandniece, Anna Tews.
Photos Courtesy of Daniel Boyer's Family





Daniel was always our person of the year!

He will especially be missed by our residents at Agape Dos who enjoyed his friendship and fine culinary skills on the fourth Monday of every month for seven years!

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"DANIEL LOVED HIS LIFE, AND HE MADE SURE THAT HE TOLD THE PEOPLE HE LOVED AND RESPECTED WHY HE LOVED AND RESPECTED THEM—A RARE THING IN THIS WORLD."

his favorites, and working with family to get back what he had lost."

In the future, Muschenheim is planning to publish a book of Boyer's recipes.

Muschenheim points out, "Daniel was far and away the most charitable person I have ever known. He was able to tie his love of food to his good works by cooking for a group of men in one of The Aliveness Project homes on a monthly basis. He knew that they regularly were fed the easy staples that most people think of when bringing food. Daniel would inquire about what they liked, and put together a whole meal around a specific cuisine or theme. It was a priority for him, and I think the people he served knew that."

Clare House Events Manager/Community Outreach Lee Haugee explains, "In 2004, Daniel purchased an item from our Friends Dining with Friends online auction. He immediately signed up to donate dinner once a month at one of our care homes, Agape Dos. For seven years, our four residents looked forward to his night. The food was wonderful, but more importantly, Daniel became a friend, too."

Muschenheim relates, "Another facet of Daniel was his love of music. Daniel did not own a television. His entertainment was primarily music. He saw live music at least a half-dozen times a month, and knew every venue in town, and was always on the prowl for great live performances. He had excellent eclectic taste. It was all

over the board, but universally soulful. His music collection was as important to him as his recipes.

"Everyone knows that Daniel was charitably inclined, but it was only after he passed, and I was helping Daniel's family [with his papers] that I realized how deep this ran. I found receipts and solicitations from nearly a hundred charities, and a box containing receipts from many more. There were perhaps a dozen charities that Daniel was involved with directly over the years, but there were dozens more that he supported financially.

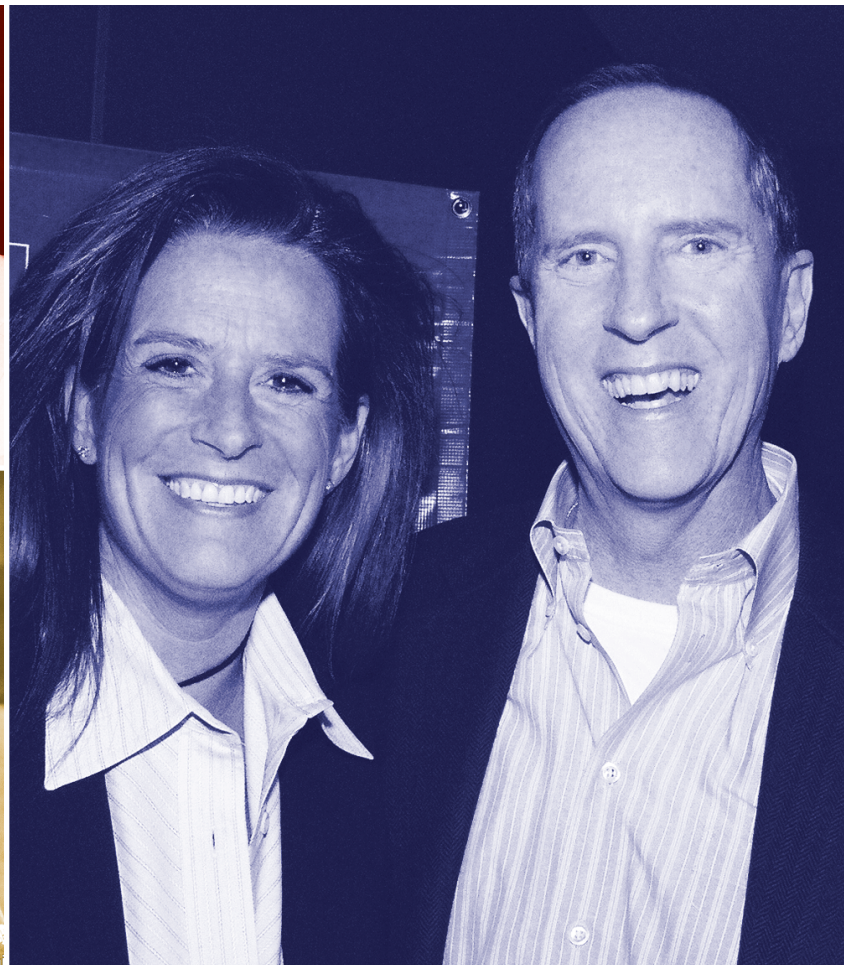
"Daniel loved his life, and he made sure that he told the people he loved and respected why he loved and respected them—a rare thing in this world. His sincere gratitude manifested itself in every aspect of his life, and resulted in his success in business and as a leader in his community."

Comments like the following are the norm: Loretta Worthington of Rainbow Health Initiatives remarks, "Daniel was supportive, serious, funny, and charming."; Smidzik states, "Daniel had an unlimited ability to give."

Putt sums up her brother this way: "Danny grew up in the shadow of two older sisters. But today, those two sisters are so proud to stand in the shadow of the fine man our brother had become."

E.B. BOATNER

Photos by Sophia Hantzes



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WORSHIP GUIDE



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DEC. 24 WORSHIP SCHEDULE

12:00 Noon - Border Chapel

2:00 PM - Art Gallery

4:00 PM - Sanctuary
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7:00 PM - Sanctuary
Childcare available for infants, ASL interpreted.

11:00 PM - Sanctuary
Prelude concert begins at 10:30 PM

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BIG GAY NEWS

**BIG
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NATIONAL

IOWA REPUBLICAN HOPES TO BE FIRST OPENLY GAY PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Radio Iowa reports that retired political consultant Fred Karger hopes to be the first openly gay presidential candidate. And he's a Republican. He recently spent \$100,000 to run a 90-second commercial about himself on FOX News in seven different Iowa media markets. He told a news conference in Des Moines in November that he wants to emulate candidates like Shirley Chisholm. Karger stated, "I'm a fighter. I'm fighting for millions of people around this country who are members of my community and so many others who are deemed second-class citizens." Calling himself an independent Republican, Karger noted, "I think the Republican Party has moved so far away from mainstream America that it is losing tremendous support—people like me."

ILLINOIS-LEGISLATURE- APPROVED CIVIL-UNION MEASURE HEADS TO GOVERNOR

According to the *Chicago Tribune*, same-sex civil-union legislation passed the Illinois Legislature. It now heads to Governor Pat Quinn, who's expected to sign the measure into law. The Illinois Senate voted 32-24 in favor, following House approval. Under the legislation, same-sex couples would gain several state-level marriage benefits.

VIRGINIA LAWMAKER CLAIMS PAT-DOWNS PART OF "HOMOSEXUAL AGENDA"

WTOP reports that Virginia Republican lawmaker Eugene Delgaudio sent a controversial e-mail to members of a conservative nonprofit, calling the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) nondiscrimination hiring policy a "Gay Bill of Special Rights." Delgaudio said, "That means the next TSA official that gives you an enhanced pat-down could be a practicing homosexual secretly getting pleasure from your submission." He also wrote to donors that Congress's "homosexual agenda" will lead to "men hand-in-

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HOLIDAY SERVICES

Sunday, December 19

5 PM Blue at Christmas? Service

Friday, December 24

4 PM Family Christmas Eve; 10:00 PM Music with 10:30 PM Christmas Eve Service

Saturday, December 25

10:30 AM Christmas Day Communion

Sunday, December 26

10:30 AM First Sunday of Christmas Communion

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December 19th at 5:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m. Pageant & Eucharist
10:30 p.m. Carols with Brass & Organ
11:00 p.m. Festal Choral Eucharist

Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

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8:30am - Worship Service
9:45am - Advent Reflections - Rev. Dr. Judith Roska
11:00am - Children and Youth Worship Service
6:30pm - Acoustic Xmas

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15TH

6:00pm - Service of Comfort - Rev. Howard Bell

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19TH

"A Ceremony of Carols" by Benjamin Britten
Mayflower Choir and Harp at
8:30am and 11:00am services
9:45am - Christmas Caroling led by Marty Haugen

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24TH

Christmas Eve Services
5:00pm - Intergenerational "I Remember" Service
7:00pm - Reflective Communion - Rev. Howard Bell
11:00pm - Lessons and Carols - Mayflower Choir

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26TH

11:00am only - Worship Service - Rev. Sarah Campbell

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hand skipping down to adoption centers to 'pick out' a little boy for themselves."

NEW JERSEY ATTORNEY GENERAL SAYS SCHOOL BOARD ALLOWED GAY-STUDENT BULLYING

According to NBC, New Jersey Attorney General Paula Dow has announced that findings from a state investigation show the Emerson School Board was responsible for allowing antigay bullying against one student to persist for at least six years. The findings cite numerous complaints by parents to school officials, but add that the school did little to follow up with parents of the children accused of bullying. Eventually, the student's parents took him out of public school, and home-schooled him. The findings are only preliminary, and the case now moves to conciliation. If that process fails, it would go to an administrative law judge for trial.

WORLD

KENYA'S PRIME MINISTER THREATENS GAY ARRESTS

The BBC reports that Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga made comments indicating his government would arrest gays and lesbians caught engaging in homosexual acts. He stated, "We will not tolerate such behaviors in the country. The constitution is very clear on this issue, and men or women found engaging in homosexuality will not be spared." After criticism from gay-rights activists, Odinga explained he only was saying that the country's constitution bans same-sex marriages. In Kenya, homosexuality is punishable by up to 14 years in prison.

HUNDREDS MARCH IN DELHI'S GAY PARADE

According to the Associated Press, hundreds sang, danced, and marched their way through the Indian city of Delhi in late November in its third Gay Pride parade. GLBT and allied marchers carried flags and signs along the parade route. Sunil Gupta told reporters, "It's a celebration of the fact that the community is here, and it's not a kind of complaining parade. I guess underneath it, there is a kind of quiet demand for rights in various areas, but today is really just about a celebration." **WRITTEN & COMPILED BY BRADLEY TRAYNOR**

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DECEMBER 26

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5:00 Family Service

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7:45 Candlelight Service

with Soloists, Harp and Organ (ASL)

10:45 Candlelight Service

with Choir, Harp, Organ and Handbells
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Candlelight Service of Holy Communion

10:30 p.m.

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Christmas Day—December 25

A Morning Service of Carols

10:00 a.m.

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Wednesday, December 22
Soup Supper • 6:00 pm
"Bonfire" Christmas Worship • 7:00 pm

Friday, December 24 • Christmas Eve
Child-Friendly Service • 4:00 pm
Candlelight Service • 5:30 & 11:00 pm

Saturday, December 25 • Christmas Day
Worship Service • 10:00 am

Sunday, December 26
Worship Service • 10:00 am

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YEAR IN REVIEW

Top 10 News Stories of 2010

From the tragedy of teen suicides to the victory of marriage legislation, here is a look at 10 of the top GLBT news headlines for 2010, as reported on BigGayNews.com.

✓ **FEDERAL COURT DECLARES CALIFORNIA'S PROPOSITION 8 UNCONSTITUTIONAL**

In August, US District Judge Vaughn Walker overturned California's Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriage in the state. In his 136-page ruling, he held that the marriage ban violates the US Constitution's guarantees of equal protection and due process. Walker wrote, "Proposition 8 fails to advance any rational basis in singling out gay men and lesbians for denial of a marriage license." Supporters of the ban immediately filed an appeal with the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals.

✓ **FEDERAL JUDGE STRIKES DOWN DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL**

US District Judge Virginia Phillips set forth a decision in September that the military's ban on openly gay troops was unconstitutional. She ruled that the ban violates the US Constitution's First and Fifth Amendment rights of gays and lesbians. Log Cabin Republicans brought the case that led to the ruling. She issued a stay that effectively ended the ban. The stay ultimately was lifted pending an upcoming appeal.

✓ **TARGET CONTRIBUTION CAUSES CONTROVERSY**

Target made headlines following a controversial \$150,000 contribution to MN Forward, a group that supported antigay Republican Minnesota gubernatorial candidate Tom Emmer. Target CEO Gregg Steinhafel ultimately apologized in an e-mail for offending some of the corporation's employees over the contribution. Following Target's refusal to honor a request from the Human Rights

Campaign to make an in-kind contribution to proequality candidates, a number of people called for a boycott of Target stores.

✓ **ANTIGAY BULLYING, TEEN SUICIDES, AND IT GETS BETTER**

The issue of antigay bullying made headlines this year, following a rash of highly-publicized teen suicides. The resulting public outcry led to the creation of the It Gets Better Campaign. More than 5,000 people, including celebrities and even President Barack Obama, participated in the campaign by filming video clips on YouTube.

✓ **LAVENDER OUTS ANTIGAY PASTOR**

The Lutheran pastor who suggested a 2009 tornado strike on a Minneapolis church was God's judgment because of its position on same-sex clergy was himself a member of a confidential support group for men with "homosexual desires." A *Lavender* Magazine cover story in June by writer John Townsend alleged that Reverend Tom Brock, Pastor of Hope Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, regularly attended Faith in Action, a Catholic support group for people attracted to members of the same sex. After a brief leave, he returned to his job at Hope, telling the Associated Press he's not gay, and never has had sex.

✓ **FLORIDA APPEALS COURT UPHOLDS GAY ADOPTION**

Florida's state ban on adoptions by gay and lesbians was struck down this year. Following the ruling, Florida Governor Charlie Crist said the state will stop enforcing the law. Frank Martin Gill, an openly gay foster parent who was denied an adoption application because he was gay, originally brought the case. Circuit Judge Cindy Lederman concluded that gays and lesbians were equal to heterosexual parents in their ability to provide healthy child rearing. The court

also found that the state violated Gill's equal-protection rights by denying him the right to adopt his foster child.

✓ **THREE IOWA JUSTICES REMOVED AFTER GAY MARRIAGE RULING**

Iowans voted in November to remove three of the state's Supreme Court justices, following the court's ruling last year that legalized same-sex marriage in the state. The vote marks the first time Iowa voters have removed a Supreme Court justice since the current system began in 1962. Gay marriage opponents spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on the campaign.

✓ **GAY MARRIAGE LAW TAKES EFFECT IN MEXICO CITY**

Mexico City's same-sex marriage law, passed by the City Assembly in December 2009, took effect in the country's capital city in March. The legislation allows gays and lesbians to marry and adopt children. Mexico City becomes one of the first jurisdictions in Latin America fully to recognize same-sex marriage.

✓ **PRESIDENT SIGNS ARGENTINA'S GAY-MARRIAGE LAW**

Argentina's President, Cristina Fernandez, signed landmark legislation in July making the country the first in Latin America to legalize same-sex marriage. She said at a signing ceremony, "Today, we are a society that is a little more egalitarian than last week."

✓ **ILLINOIS-LEGISLATURE-APPROVED CIVIL-UNION MEASURE HEADS TO GOVERNOR**

Same-sex civil union legislation passed the Illinois Legislature in December. Under the measure, which is scheduled to take effect in July 2011, same-sex couples would gain several state-level marriage benefits.

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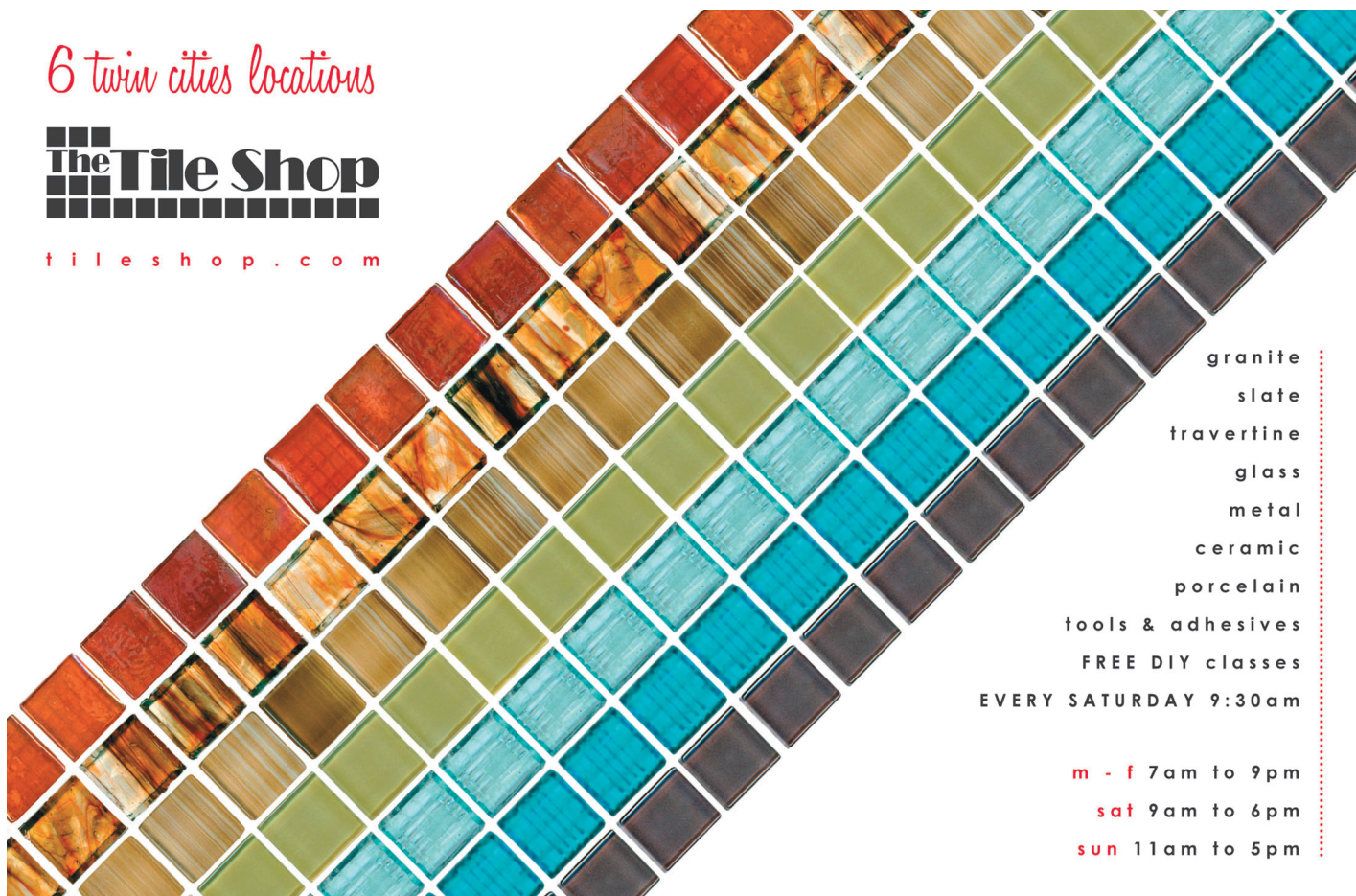
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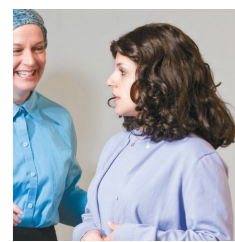
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(Clockwise from left) Loring Yenor. Photo Courtesy of Cardinal Theatricals • *Black Pearl Sings*. Photo by Ann Marsden • *Women's Minyan*. Photo by Sarah Whiting

2010

YEAR IN REVIEW

Best Productions

1. *M. Butterfly*, Guthrie Theater
2. *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Guthrie Theater
3. *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Torch Theater
4. *The Homecoming*, Gremlin Theatre
5. *Evita*, Theatre Latte Da
6. *A Few Good Men*, Urban Samurai Productions
7. *Eclipsed*, Frank Theatre
8. *The Master Butchers Singing Club*, Guthrie Theater
9. *Traveling Light*, Theatre Pro Rata
10. **(3-way tie)**
The Music Lovers, Workhaus Collective
Rent, Cardinal Theatricals
Women's Minyan, Minnesota Jewish Theatre

Theater Event of the Year (Large House)

The Great Game: Afghanistan, London's Tricycle Theatre at Guthrie Theater

Theater Event of the Year (Small House)

Fresh Five Series, 20% Theatre Company Twin Cities at Bedlam Theatre

Theater Artist of the Year

Peter Rothstein, Director, *M. Butterfly*, Guthrie Theater, & *Evita*, Theatre Latte Da

Best Revival



Fierce Love: Stories of Black Gay Life, Unity Black Pride

Best Ensemble

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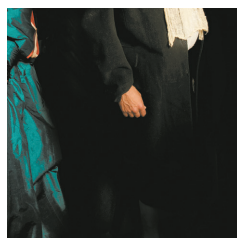
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(Clockwise from left) *The Mystery of Irma Vep*. Photo by Ann Marsden • *Dancing at Lughnasa*. Photo by Ann Marsden • *Michele!*. Photo by Jesse Doughty • *Bent*. Photo Courtesy of Candid Theater and Matthew Garrison

Best Performance Art

(tie)

Persephone: Reign of Fire, Infiattati Fire Circus
The Polish Pugilist, Catterton Productions

Best Director

Harry Waters Jr., *Fierce Love: Stories of Black Gay Life*, Unity Black Pride

Best Choreographer

Michael Matthew Ferrell, *Evita*, Theatre Latte Da

Best Actor (Musical)

Eric Webster, *City of Angels*, Bloomington Civic Theatre

Best Actor (Nonmusical)

Andrew Long, *M. Butterfly*, Guthrie Theater

Best Actress (Musical)

(tie)

Crystal Fox, *Black Pearl Sings*, Penumbra Theatre
Zoe Pappas, *Evita*, Theatre Latte Da

Best Actress (Nonmusical)

Gretchen Egolf, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Guthrie Theater

Best Supporting Actor

David Coral, *My Name is Asher Lev*, Minnesota Jewish Theatre

Best Supporting Actress

Stacia Rice, *Queens of Burlesque*, History Theatre, & *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Guthrie Theater

Best Solo Performance

Sheila Regan, *The Keys Experiment*, Red Eye Theater & Artery 2010

Funniest Performance & Best Comedy Revue

Janet Paone as Marcus Bachmann & *Michele! The Musical Bachmannantary*, FUNauthorized Productions

Best Crossgender Performance

Randy Reyes, *M. Butterfly*, Guthrie Theater

Best Androgynous Performance

Julie Ann Nevill, *10 Virgins*, Theatre Unbound

Best Set Designer

C. Lance Brockman, *Black Pearl Sings*, Penumbra Theatre

Best Costume Designer

Matthew J. LeFebvre, *The Mystery of Irma Vep*, Jungle Theater

Best Sound Designer

Dixie Treichel, *Medea: A Noh Play & 10 Virgins*, Theatre Unbound, *The Keys Experiment*, Red Eye Theater & Artery 2010

Best Playwriting

Kevin Anthony Kautzman, *Iris*, Red Eye Theater & Artery 2010

Best Shows from Out of Town

Hotel Modern's *The Great War*, Walker Art Center
August Osage County National Tour, Ordway Center for the Performing Arts

Best Music Director

Denise Prosek, *Evita*, Theatre Latte Da

Best Music Score

Eric Mayson, *Iris*, Red Eye Theater & Artery 2010

Notable Original Musical Collaborations

Madame Majesta's Miracle Medicine Show, Interact Center 515, Flower Shop Project

Extraordinary Performances

Peter Beard & James Napoleon Stone, *Bent*, Candid Theater
Erik Hoover & Billy Mullaney, *The*

Oldest Story in the World, Theatre Novi Most

Nora Montanez, *Expecting Isabel*, Theatre Unbound, & *Strike/Slip*, Nimbus Theatre

Dario Tangelson, *The House of the Spirits*, Mixed Blood Theatre

Kinaundre Lee & Lorin Yenor, *Rent*, Cardinal Theatricals

Stephen Yoakam & Michelle Barber, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, Jungle Theater

Joshua James Campbell, *The Glass Menagerie*, Jungle Theater

Nathan Christopher, *The Music Lovers*, Workhaus Collective

John Lilleberg & Melanie Wehrmacher, *Iris*, Red Eye Theater & Artery 2010

Patrick Scully, *Thrive!: 25 Years of Living Positive*, Patrick's Cabaret

Ricardo Antonio Chavira & Brian Keane, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Guthrie Theater

Joseph Scrimshaw, *Dudley: Rigged for Laughter*, History Theatre

Peter Hansen & Sarah Agnew, *Dollhouse*, Guthrie Theater

Jeremy Catterton, *The Polish Pugilist*

Ensemble, *Yellow Face*, Mu Performing Arts

Sherwin Resurreccion, *Cowboy Versus Samurai*, Mu Performing Arts

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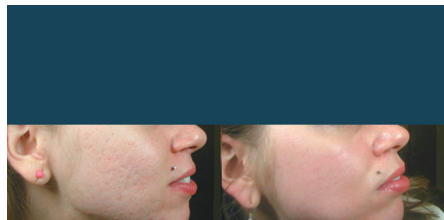
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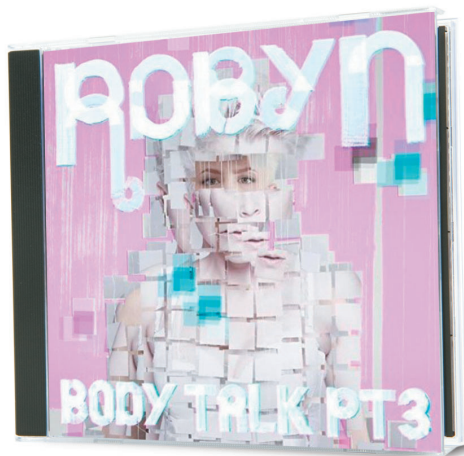


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Body Talk

ROBYN

Robyn's 2010 trilogy ends with a sort-of compilation of the past mixed in with the new. The set, which includes five songs each from Parts 1 and 2, tosses in five brand-new tracks. Unless you need the complete set, this one will serve you fine. The former teen pop star has hit the charts hard in 2010, being a real highlight in a year dominated by music that has been terribly tacky, utterly bland, or both—hey, Ke\$sha, enjoying your 15 minutes? The latest single, "Indestructible," continues Robyn's hot streak for the year.

It shows a bit more pop than the hard-edged disco she made earlier in the year. That sense of pop continues through the new tunes, which may give us an idea of where she's going in the future. For the past, all the joys from the early releases are here, from "Fembot" to "U Should Know Better" to "Don't Fucking Tell Me What to Do."



Gold: Greatest Hits

ABBA

Confession time: The first album I ever bought was a copy of ABBA's *Greatest Hits, Vol. 2*. Maybe I was sending signals to myself, but while my elementary school classmates were digging to Kiss Dynasty, I was at home rocking out to "Knowing Me, Knowing You." Now, 30-some years later, here we have another packaging of pretty much those same songs. The glossy Swedish pop is intact, and if you have any of the past versions of the album, you know the deal. The appeal of this one is a bonus DVD of the band's pre-MTV promotional videos. It not only provides another showcase for the music, but also gives us all a scary insight into 1970s European fashion. Really, the disco-cum-Scandinavian sweaters worn in the "Waterloo" video belong in a bad-taste museum. That aside, if you don't need to see what the ABBA folks looked like three decades years ago, just keep your current *Gold*.



The Ladykiller

CEE LO GREEN

Cee Lo Green's "Fuck You" was the viral single of the summer—and an absolutely brilliant use of obscenity. The clean version, "Forget You," just doesn't cut it, because so much of the song's pleasure comes from having a tune that sounds like it could have been drawn from the 1960s, fueled by such a bald, direct, and not-ready-for-the-airwaves lyric. *The Ladykiller* is full of catchy songs and endearing performances that—while not as brilliant as the leadoff track—are certainly an endearing antidote to the zero-personality pop dominating the charts right now. On the album, Green reaches back across decades of soul and R&B music for musical backdrops, evoking the synth-heavy 1980s one minute, and then reaching for '70s-style strings the next. Through it all, he showcases an able voice that flexes easily along the higher register, giving the album just an extra touch of timelessness and class.



My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy

KANYE WEST

The ego has landed for album number five. After a couple of years of publicity and controversy—mainly fake controversy, but, hey, TMZ and the like need something to talk about—West returns to what he actually does best: making excellent music. While overstuffed, *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* is an able follow-up to the sterling *808s and Heartbreak*. In place of that album's spare style and confessional tone, we get a set loaded with guest stars; familiar samples deployed in unique ways (including King Crimson, something I never expected to say about a West album); and lots of talking from West himself. The main topic, not surprisingly, is our hero. A bevy of super-guests—name another album with Jay Z, Elton John, and Bon Iver—give us a break, though never for too long. At times, the gloss becomes too much, but it usually is leavened by a turn of phrase or a particularly clever sample.

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www.LilyTomlin.com

photo credit: Greg Gorman 2009

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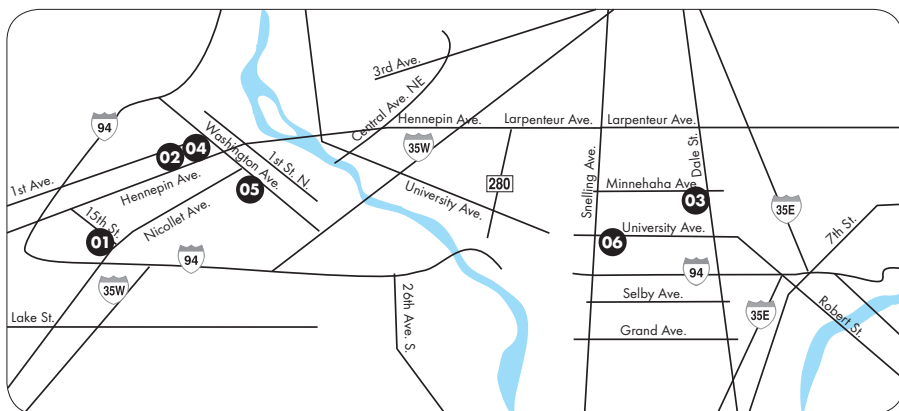



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1 part Triple Sec
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1/2 part Pineapple Juice
Splash of Grenadine
Garnish with a cherry and a lemon

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Photo by George Holdgrafer

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TICKLES
December 5

Photos by George Holdgrafer



RING IN THE NEW YEAR AT THE RAIL!
Friday, December 31
Free Champagne Toast at Midnight

Nightly Lineup

MONDAY
Arts & Industry Night
\$2 Miller Products • \$4 Jager

TUESDAY
D*T*R*T*Y (Brass Rail Bingo) 8 PM
\$2 Bud Products

WEDNESDAY
Exotic Dancers 10 PM-2 AM
\$3 Captain Morgan 7 PM-2 AM

THURSDAY
Open Mic Night 9 PM
Hosted by Anthony
\$3 Red Bull Vodka 7 PM-2 AM

FRIDAY
Live Piano 9:30 PM-1:30 AM
\$4.75 Captain Morgan 7 PM-2 AM

SATURDAY
Live Piano 9:30 PM-1:30 AM
\$5 Nuvo 7 PM-2 AM

SUNDAY
Karaoke 10 PM-2 AM
Hosted by Billie La Tease Austin
\$3 Svedka Vodka 7 PM-2 AM

HAPPY HOUR
NOON-7 PM DAILY
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The 3rd Thursday Each Month

When: Thursday, January 20, 2011
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Dress Code: None - Come as you are
Where: Coale's
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Last Call at

GLADIUS

According to a management source, Gladius at 1111 Hennepin Avenue in Downtown Minneapolis will close its doors permanently on December 18. It's the second local GLBT bar to shut down in the past two months, following on the demise of Rumours/Innuendo in St. Paul on October 30.

Owner Philip Berglin opened Gladius on September 11, 2009. The Ancient-Roman-themed establishment billed itself as "The New York Chic of Minneapolis," attracting primarily an upscale younger clientele.

Over its year-and-a-quarter history, Gladius hosted a number of fundraisers for local GLBT organizations, especially the Imperial Court of Minnesota, of which Berglin was Emperor X and Empress XIV (as Heather Haldane). **GEORGE HOLDGRAFER**

Imperial Court of Minnesota Holds Fundraiser for Toys for Tots



Steve Seyb (right) and Treonna Alert
Photo by Dan Lucas

On November 28 at Gladius, the Imperial Court of Minnesota held a fundraiser for Toys for Tots. Emperor IX, Steve Seyb, raised money by selling chances to win two teddy bears—in memory of his late predecessor, Emperor I, Jerry Case, "The Teddy Bear Emperor," who died in 1996. Treonna Alert was the lucky prizewinner.

GEORGE HOLDGRAFER

New Year's Eve Cheapie Night

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31

\$1 Rail Drinks & Domestic Beer
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\$5 Cover

Awesome Dance Music With DJ Tony
No Frills—Just Great Deals and Good Times!

Mark Your Calendar

Dragged Out • Fri., Dec. 17
Elegance • Sat., Dec. 25
TNT Variety Show • Sat., Jan. 8
YOLO • Fri., Jan. 14

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TUESDAYS - Glee Night
WEDNESDAYS - BOGO Date Night
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Celebration**
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Sun., Jan. 16 • 4 PM

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BAR CALENDAR

For club addresses, phone numbers, and websites, see "Bar Advertiser Guide" on page 32. For events not at bars, see <LavenderMagazine.com/calendar>.



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16

Lavender's ThirtDays
5:30 PM. Gay 90's.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17

Gary Collins
5 PM. Ticks.
Mia Dorr
9 PM. Ticks.
Dragged Out
9:30 PM. Town House.
Holiday Party
La Femme Show Lounge. Gay 90's.
Foam Party
Dance Annex. Gay 90's.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18

Whitney Rhoder
8:30 PM. Ticks.
Chi Chi LaRue's Holiday Party
9 PM. Jetset.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19

Singles Pool Tournament
4 PM. 19 Bar.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 25**Elegance**

9 PM. Town House.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31****Gary Collins**

5 PM. Tickles.

Whitney Rhodes

10 PM. Tickles.

New Year's Eve Celebration

19 Bar

Ring in the New Year at the Rail

Brass Rail

New Year's Eve Gala

Coale's

2011 New Year's Eve Party

Gay 90's

New Year's Eve Cheapie Night

Town House

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1**Jeff Olvon**

8:30 PM. Tickles

Lip Service

9 PM. Town House.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 8**Minnesota Storm Patrol Burt**

5 PM. Town House.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 14**YOLO**

9 PM. Town House.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 15**Imperial Start to the New Year**

Imperial Court of Minnesota

Benefit for The Trevor Project

5:30 PM. Dance Annex. Gay 90's.

TNT Show

9 PM. Town House.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 16**Singles Pool Tournament**

4 PM. 19 Bar. ■

LEGENDARY CHI CHI LARUE

Hosts Annual Twin Cities Holiday Party



Photo Courtesy of Chi Chi LaRue

On December 18, the legendary Chi Chi LaRue returns to the Twin Cities to host her annual Holiday Party, at Jetset in Downtown Minneapolis. She'll preside over the festivities as DJ, sharing the spinning with her nephew, DJ Bryan Gerard. She has been headlining this always-popular December event since 1997.

A native of Hibbing, Minnesota, LaRue launched her career as a female impersonator in the Twin Cities in the early 1980s, before moving to Los Angeles in 1986. For more than two decades, she has been the

world's most famous gay adult video director. As well, she is a much-in-demand DJ internationally. In 2007, *Out* Magazine named LaRue one of its 50 Most Powerful Gay Men and Women in America.

LaRue says, "I always look forward to coming home to Minnesota for the holidays to see friends and family. My annual Holiday Party in the Twin Cities is one of the highlights of the year for me. I hope everyone will join me for a naughty but nice evening to heat us all up at least one night this frigid December." **GEORGE HOLDGRAFER**

**THE ATONS HOLIDAY
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THE ALIVENESS
PROJECT AND
OPEN ARMS OF
MINNESOTA**
December 5
Tickles

Photos by George Holdgrafer



**PARTY WITH US
NEW YEAR'S EVE!**
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Featuring KnightRider Stallion's Drag King Show

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**JANUARY
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Start to the New Year**
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International Mr. Leather 2010 Makes History Three Ways

INTERVIEW WITH TYLER MCCORMICK

Tyler McCormick competed in the 2010 International Mr. Leather (IML) contest as Mr. Rio Grande Leather. When he won, he made history three ways: first transgender IML, first IML to use a wheelchair, and first IML from New Mexico.

You are a transman. Do you also consider yourself gay?

The trans thing is sort of thrown in there, but if I have an identity, it's as a gay man.

So, you are both a G and a T in the GLBT acronym.

At one time, I thought I was a lesbian. It was short-lived. I took a year out in the middle of college, because I was not understanding whether I was a boy or a girl, and I was trying to figure out who to be. I contemplated it for a year, and finally decided I'm really a guy. By the end of college, I was on hormones, and had had some surgery, and I was good.

When did leather and kink enter the picture?

At 12 and 13, I remember fantasizing about things that were nonvanilla. And even younger than that, I remember watching cartoons, going "Woo-hoo, the cowboy's tying up the Indian." I entered into my first contract when I was 19.

What is your disability?

I have cerebral palsy. There's a disconnect between my brain and muscles, primarily in my legs. The muscles in my legs don't know when to turn themselves off, so they like to just stay on all the time, fighting with each other.

Is "disability" the word you prefer?

As long as you're not intending malice, I don't really care what words you end up using. I personally choose the words "gimp" and "cripple." I find that if I use those words



Tyler McCormick, International Mr. Leather 2010.
Photo by Steve Lenius

with people, they get over it a lot faster.

What did you think when they called your name as the new International Mr. Leather?

As soon as my brain clicked over that it was me, this whole process went through my head. My partner would like to become a minister, and right before my contestant interview, I had asked him if he'd like to say a prayer. And his prayer was not: Let him win; let him lose. It was: Let Tyler be the man that he is, and put him on the path that he needs to be on. So, now, I was, like, wait a second, this is the path the universe thinks I should be on. I was just so humbled.

I hang on to three moments in that week-end: the prayer that Aaron said over me; and then, all my classmates piling on top of me after my name was announced; and then, less than 24 hours after that, my husband gets down on one knee, and proposes to me. He had said he was going to marry me after

I stepped down from Mr. Rio Grande Leather in October. So, when I won IML, I was, like, oh, no, he said he wasn't going to marry me until after I stepped down. I was a little freaked out. So, when he proposed, I knew everything was going to be OK.

When are you getting married?
On New Year's Day.

What has your title year been like so far? Are people accommodating of the wheelchair?

It's been amazing. People have made accessibility better, because they knew I was going to be there, and I hope they continue to keep the accessibility after I roll away.

What about the trans angle?

I hear from other people that people have issues, but I haven't run into any problems because of it. I figure if I show up, and I'm genuinely and authentically Tyler, then that gets people to genuinely and authentically be themselves, and we'll all get along just fine.

I have never written a column on disabilities. When I write that column, what should I include?

Everybody's got some sort of limitation—takes some medication, wears glasses—and if we go from the perspective that some of these limitations are just more obvious than others, then everyone gets a lot less afraid. Anybody who walks up to me, and is genuine and honest and has questions—I am more than willing to answer. I would much rather have them come up and ask me than assume that I can or can't do something.

McCormick will be in Minneapolis in February for the Creating Change Conference, presented by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Visit his website at <www.iml2010.com>. **STEVE LENIUS**



Since Thanksgiving, I absolutely have been drowning in Minnesotan heavy cold-weather cuisine, so I was looking forward to something different. Traditional Japanese fare is lighter and easy on the stomach—comfort food, redefined.

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SERVING SUPERLATIVE JAPANESE CUISINE FOR MORE THAN A HALF-CENTURY

Though Fuji Ya has been around in some form since 1959, it remains one of the hippest local eateries. At its Minneapolis location, the interior walks the line between slick and inviting. Escapist without being kitschy, it is appropriate for anything from a first date to a business lunch. Known for its sushi, it also offers traditional Japanese entrées to please a finicky Midwestern diner.

I am no Andrew Zimmern (I do draw the line somewhere *before* lamb eyeball), but I have sucked down fried tendon, which was absolutely delicious. So, whether it's eel, yellowtail, or mackerel, adventurous sushi chefs pretty much can count me in. Also, since Thanksgiving, I absolutely have been drowning in Minnesotan heavy cold-weather cuisine, so I was looking forward to something different. Traditional Japanese fare is lighter and easy on the stomach—comfort food, redefined.

However, one still needs a little something to warm the bones, and our waiter was Johnny on the spot with a Hendricks sake-tini (\$9.25). This refreshing cocktail also can be made with vodka if you prefer, but with the infused Hendricks, this cucumber-kissed beauty is subtle, smooth, and dangerously drinkable. ➔

(Clockwise from upper left) Black Tobiko (infused soy flying fish egg); Ikura Salmon Roe; Wasabi Tobiko (wasabi infused flying fish roe); Masago (smelt roe); Tobiko (flying fish egg).
Photos by Hubert Bonnet



(Clockwise from upper left) Bar area; Preparing sushi; Aji (Spanish mackerel).

Known for its sushi, it also offers traditional Japanese entrées to please a finicky Midwestern diner.

My dining partner, who is not swayed so easily, instantly made a grab for the extensive sake list, which is befitting of the Twin Cities's first Japanese restaurant. Our waiter explained that long ago, samurai would complain of being cheated unless their sake cups literally were filled to overflowing. Fuji Ya maintains that long-standing tradition. A lit-

tle saucer is placed beneath the cup to catch the significant excess. It seems like such a waste of excellent sake, but I'm just guessing even a thirsty samurai would consider it gauche to lap from the saucer.

From the sake list, we first tried Shichi Hon Yari (\$25/bottle), which has a pleasant earthiness, and was wonderful with our appe-

tizers; next, Wakatake Onikoroshi (\$16/\$75), which is subtly fruity; and finally, Ohyama (\$10/\$110), which is playful and refreshing, and perhaps my favorite of the three.

Now that I have mentioned the generous pours, I must put my readers on a two-sake maximum, if you still are trying to impress someone with your savage wit. You heard me, lovelies! This little samurai, who couldn't have fought her way out of a Kowalski's bag when it was all said and done, was eating like a starved tiger. You simply will have to return multiple times if you wish to try more sake—lucky for you, the fare also is worthy of making a habit of it.

When visiting Fuji Ya, on the hot appetizer list, do not overlook Asparagus (\$7.95), which is sautéed in a ginger sauce. Among all the dishes boasting exotic and mysterious names, this little plain-Jane-sounding dish is a surprise knockout.

Kama Hama (\$8.95) followed. It is grilled yellowtail cheek. A long-established Japanese delicacy, it is a substantial dish—almost intimidating, really—but our server encouraged us just to attack it boldly with our chopsticks, and mind the bones. A few jabs ➞

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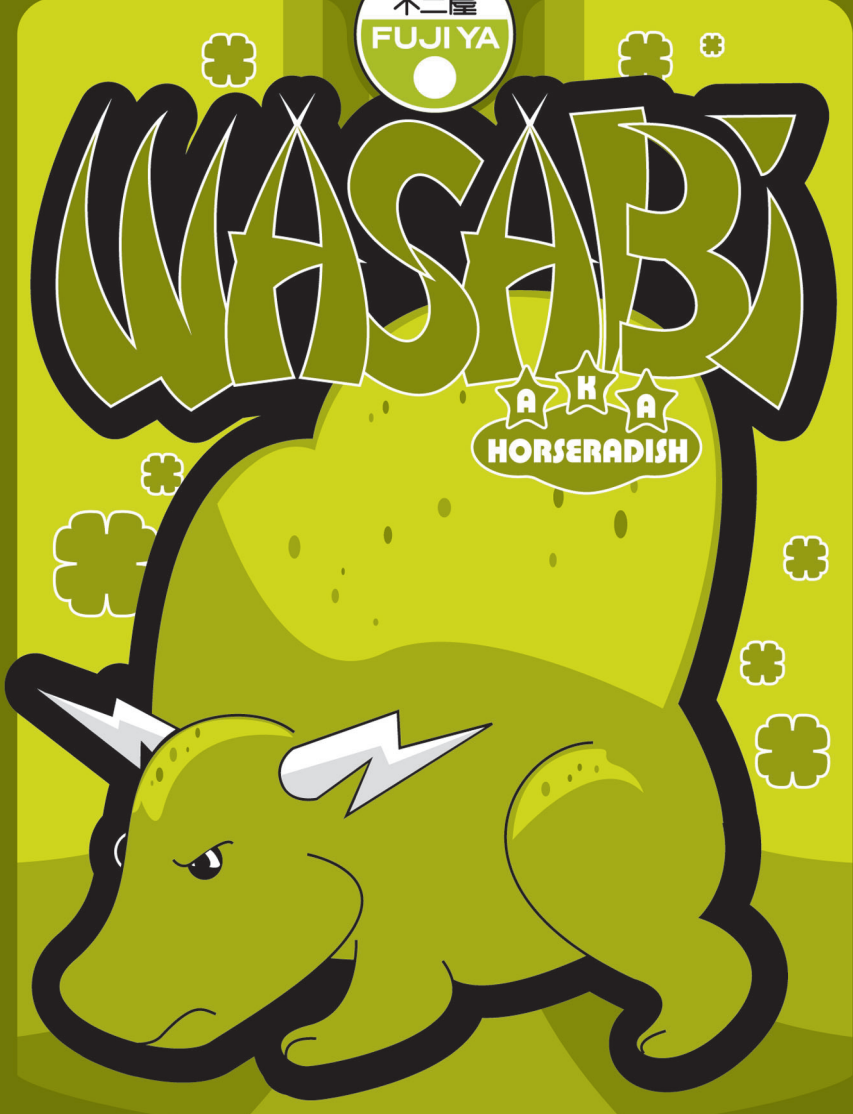


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My dining partner, who had spent considerable time in Japan, marveled at how authentic Fuji Ya's mochi is.



and pinches later, a succulent morsel indeed was mine. The flavorful fish is served with its traditional and appropriately-assertive partner, ponzu shoyu sauce.

Next, the sushi chefs created an exuberant platter of different preparations of mackerel (\$12.95-\$19.55), followed by a maki plate trussed up in colorful, spicy roe (\$22-\$28). Oh, heaven! Excellent sushi always makes me wonder why we ever bother with cooking. Then, my unasked question was answered. Our mackerel platter came with a cheerful-looking fish that happened to be impaled on two sticks, hovering above its raw brethren. Our server explained that this beauty quickly can be fried to a crisp, and then eaten like a big fat fish chip. Yes, please! Our fishy friend was whisked away, and soon after, we enjoyed a very crunchy and unexpected treat.

One doesn't always think of dessert at a Japanese restaurant. Now, after dining at Fuji Ya, I wonder why this is so. We were served Strawberry Ice Cream Mochi—delicate ice cream balls (often green tea-flavored) covered in sticky rice. My dining partner, who had spent considerable time in Japan, marveled at how authentic Fuji Ya's mochi is. I take her at her word. It was served with green tea ice cream, plus, for a special seasonal treat, a little bit of chocolate ice. Unfortunately, I only could manage a little bit of this rare wonder, so I will have to go back to enjoy it more fully another time. I'm sure dedication is part of the samurai code, but to be perfectly honest, I will be returning purely for pleasure. **HEIDI FELLNER**

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(Above, from left) Dining area; Ahi Tuna Sockeye Salmon. (Below, from left) Suzuki (striped sea bass); Kampachi (young yellowtail); Aji (Spanish mackerel); Ahi Tuna Sockeye Salmon; Uni (Sea Urchin).



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Photos by Sophia Hantzes



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MANCHESTER

ENGLAND

Where but Manchester will you find a statue honoring President Abe Lincoln for his views?

If London were the New York of England, then Manchester stands as its Chicago, the country's burly second city. They're sisters across the pond and under the skin. Both grew prosperous on the labors of a strong working class—cotton mills in Manchester, meatpacking in Chicago—and the same feisty labor movements, each launching raucous strikes to even the economic imbalance.

Manchester's Peoples' History Museum bristles with depictions of sweatshops, child labor (the Little Match Girl was no fairytale here), suffragettes, and abolitionists. And where but Manchester will you find a statue honoring President Abe Lincoln for his views? As I followed the museum's depictions of the struggles for democracy, a teacher made sure his young charges got the message: "What does 'rebellion' mean? 'Revolution?'" (PS: The kids knew the answers.)

Both cities idolize their football teams. The Manchester Union plays in a sparkling stadium (tours available) at Salford Quay. The fans' gritty, beat-the-odds-and-win spirit explodes again in the quay's War Museum, designed by celeb architect Daniel Libeskind with a deliberately confusing entrance to underscore the message that war is shattering—as depicted inside in interac-



(Above) Bridge at night. (Below) One of the many venues in Manchester. Photos Courtesy of MarketingManchester.com



(Clockwise from upper left) City scene • Downtown Manchester. Photo Courtesy of MarketingManchester.com • Musician. Photo by Russell Bloor

MANCHESTER'S GAY VILLAGE IS CENTERED ON CANAL STREET, HEMMING THE (DUH!) CANAL WITH A RAINBOW OF HOTELS, BARS, CLUBS, OUTDOOR CAFES, AND INDOOR PLEASURES.

tive form. What was the worst pest in the trenches: lice or maggots? Put your hand in the box, and feel the answer. Worst smell? A nose test, too. Listen to recorded accounts of soldiers, prisoners, evacuees. See films of Manchester's repeated bombings. Then, step back onto its busy streets, bustling with the famous Manchester swagger that forestalled defeat, and join the lads for a pint or three in the nearest pub.

Explore the Art Museum (all museums are free) with its happier message, conveyed in its peaches-and-cream pre-Raphaelite portraits, and earlier scions, full of the original Manchester swagger, whose likenesses roam the streets today. An annex displays quirky Victorian collections, like that of one compulsive, Mary Gregg, who amassed everything from thimbles to stuffed frogs. It also salutes the designer-collector items of tomorrow: arty chairs to Coronation mugs.

The John Rylands Library, an intricate Gothic landscape, houses collections of a literary sort, including the oldest existing page of the New Testament from 125 AD. Its Historic Reading Room (which earns those capitals) caused a passerby to whisper, "Is

this a church?"

No, but St. Anne's is, to be sure. John Wesley preached here in 1757. And so, of course, is the Cathedral, whose 19th-Century exterior envelops a 14th-Century interior boasting an elaborately carved wood choir stall, where a bit of that Manchester swagger sneaked in. What's a pig doing in a church? A monkey?

Stroll to the nearby Manchester Wheel, a Ferris ride of swagger supreme, offering overviews of the city. At its foot spill the city's prime shopping streets, as well as the Royal Exchange Theatre, with an in-the-round stage where you're up-close-and-personal with performers like Hugh Grant and Helen Mirrin.

Just beyond stretches the Northern Quarter, a countercultural enclave teeming with "dead-trendy" (as they say) boutiques, vintage clothiers, used bookshops, ethnic cafes, and clubs bouncing with live music. Swing south, in this easily-strolled city, to Chinatown, the largest in Europe, with its iconic arch.

Manchester's Gay Village is centered on Canal Street, hemming the (duh!) canal with a rainbow of hotels, bars, clubs, outdoor ca-

fes, and indoor pleasures. TV's British *Queer as Folk* was based here. A Pride Parade ignites the city every August, while October brings a gala Gay Wedding Show, which has tied the knot for more than 6,800 couples since same-sex marriage became legal in 2004. Visit: <www.visitmanchester.com/discover/lgbt.aspx>; <www.manchestergaybars.com>; <www.gayweddingslow.co.uk>.

Trade your swagger for a cool and polished stance to enjoy the town's premier eateries, leading off with Opus, star of the five-star Radisson Edwardian Hotel, which occupies the venerable Free Trade Hall of 1858—home to every stripe of performer from Dickens to Bob Dylan and Madonna. Opus One, its restaurant, boasts star-quality fare like my starter of liver pâtés with green tea jelly—or choose the smoked venison carpaccio, or terrine of organic salmon with lime-and-avocado mousse. Proceed to brill with scallion and crab ravioli—or prime rib with corned beef-and-shallot hash, maple-infused veggies, and potatoes roasted in duck fat. OK, pikers can choose a luscious roast vegetable paella. A platter of elite British cheeses makes the per- ➡



(Clockwise from left) City dusk landscape. Photo Courtesy of MarketingManchester.com • Liverpool. Photo Courtesy of Stock.xchng



LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND

Liverpool, a port city an hour distant from Manchester, makes a grand day journey. Sylvia, our guide, professes, “People think there’s rivalry between the two cities—and they’re right!” Liverpool has a smaller Wheel, a larger port—and The Beatles.

On the waterfront—where, indeed, Brando’s *On the Waterfront* was filmed, and a new museum of city history will open in 2011—the ferry terminal hosts a free display of hitherto-unpublished, behind-the-scenes photos of the Fab Four.

Nearby, at Albert Dock, a trendy complex houses the Tate Modern Gallery, a maritime museum, and one powerfully detailing slavery—Liverpool was the main distribution center for Africans sent to the New World.

But the star attraction is its neighbor, the Beatles Story. The audio-visual tour down memory lane includes repros of Abbey Road, the recording studio; the shop where the lads bought their musical instruments on the installment plan; the Cavern, a coffeehouse where they performed 274 times; their first public performance as rock stars in 1957 (a younger Sylvia was there); their first national, then international, tour; their homes. As George Harrison himself put it, “The country used us as an excuse to party.”

Party on today in The Cavern, descending its depths to hear current raves like The Atomic Kittens. Stay the night at the posh Hard Day’s Night Hotel, with life-size statues above the sidewalk. Or join a tour to visit Penny Lane, Strawberry Fields, and more. In honor of John Lennon’s 70th birthday on October 9, 2010, his son unveiled a new Peace Monument to anchor the city.

Liverpool launched the first Gay Pride Parade in the land. And at the ferry terminal aside the Mersey River, it annually hosts the beyond-ultra Fairies Across the Mersey.

Check out <www.VisitLiverpool.com>. **CARLA WALDEMAR**

AMERICAN AIRLINES FLIES DIRECTLY FROM CHICAGO TO MANCHESTER, **WHICH MAKES A GETAWAY SUPEREASY.**

fect finale—if you’re immune to the banana parfait, that is.

Michelin-starred Chef Michael Caines plunks his stellar restaurant in the ’50s-themed ABode hotel, where foodies can savor a salad of crispy-crust egg atop watercress puree and soft cheese, then proceed to salmon upon a fricassee of lentils, with nettle puree and fennel foam. Follow with a prune-and-Armagnac soufflé and matching ice cream. Or opt for the ambitious tasting menu.

Upper-crust clothier Harvey Nichols also hosts a stylish restaurant and a casual brasserie, where you’re invited to dine on rabbit-and-black-putting ravioli; Cheshire beef with truffle gnocchi; and, indeed, that all-time British icon, fish and chips with mushy peas (you had to have been there).

City Café, at City Inn, thrills locavores with soup of watercress and potato; cheddar, potato, and tarragon tart; fillet of brill topped with cockles; and lovely British cheeses.

Mr. Thomas’s Chop House, straight from your dream of a cozy Victorian pub-café, re-thinks classics like corned-beef hash cake crowned with a soft-poached egg; steak and kidney pie; and sticky toffee pudding.

Atmospheric pubs, as prevalent as pigeons, include Britain’s Protection—200 years old and still pouring pints of Rust (a lager) and Mary Rose (bitter) amid coveys of revelers.

American Airlines flies directly from Chicago to Manchester, which makes a getaway supereasy. Contact www.AA.com and <www.marketingmanchester.com> to make your plans. **CARLA WALDEMAR**

UNITED
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—

AN INTIMATE INTERVIEW WITH MY PARTNER, **LT. EVERETT MORROW**

BY MIKEY ROX

Through the years, I've had the pleasure of interviewing an array of pop and gay culture's most intriguing personalities.

I remember distinctly the scheduled 20-minute conversation with rocker-turned-actor Henry Rollins that extended into an hour's worth of entertaining chat; exchanging e-mails on multiple occasions with superstar Cyndi Lauper to discuss her inspiring True Colors Tour; the verifiable laughfest with comedienne Margaret Cho whenever she had a new show to promote; and the no-holds-barred Q&A with Billy Bean, a former Major League Baseball player, and still one of few athletes from the four main American sports ever to come out publicly.

Yes, I've interviewed some of the most interesting people alive—but none of them compare to this interview with my own fiancé. ➔

Lt. Everett Earl Morrow and I met in 2006. He was visiting Baltimore, my home at the time, on weekend leave from the Navy. Our romance was a whirlwind. What I meant to finish the first night it started—because of my own insecurities about long-distance dating—has turned into a three-and-a-half year love affair with no end in sight. But just because we're still together doesn't mean our relationship hasn't experienced its fair share of ups and downs.

One of the most outstanding and complicating issues of our life together is that I lead a rather public life. I'm a writer, a social networker, and sometimes a socialite who likes to see and be seen. He, on the other hand, is quiet, reserved, and generally uninterested in rocking the proverbial boat.

Until now. Refusing to rest on his laurels regarding the military's Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) policy, Morrow has made the brave choice to speak out and share his story—despite the consequences.

In this intimate, revealing interview between partners—one a journalist, the other a Naval officer—Morrow discusses his days as a midshipman at the United States Naval Academy; juggling his sexuality with his commitment to our country; making the tough decision to choose personal fulfillment over professional gain; and the discriminatory DADT policy that ultimately ended his military career.

When you were accepted into the Naval Academy as a teenager, were you afraid that your sexuality would be problematic?

No more than growing up in a small suburban town. I wasn't openly gay to my family and friends when I entered the Naval Academy, and being aware of DADT at the time, I didn't have any plans for that to change. Ultimately, I was afraid of what "coming out" would mean for my education, career, and future. I wanted nothing more than to be honest with everyone, but at 17 years old, I just didn't know how to reconcile the two lifestyles, and therefore stayed in the closet. I did this despite the personal toll that it was taking, and would continue to take.

How did you handle your sexuality during that time and throughout your military career? Did you pursue your interest in guys and in what capacity?

I handled it like many others did—I didn't say or do anything that would call into question my sexuality. Even though I had no doubt that I was gay, I couldn't risk raising the doubt in others that I was. At first, out of fear, I didn't pursue any homosexual interests. The risk was just too big to chance it. I lived in the dormitory while at the Naval Academy, which afforded little privacy—plus, I didn't have a car for two years, and otherwise was just afraid of being caught. This is part of that personal toll that I paid as result of DADT. I would have liked nothing more than to have had both a professional and personal life during

those four years. It wasn't until I reported to my first command almost two years after graduation that I even thought of doing anything. Even then, I made sure I was on liberty or leave, and far out of town.

Did you come out to any of your classmates or shipmates while you were an active duty officer?

No, not while I was on active duty. Finishing my active-duty obligation was too important to take the risk on what someone else might do. I felt like my service was not only important to the mission at hand, but as much to my future. It was a professional milestone that I began, and had to finish. So, the tradeoff was to make a personal sacrifice to accommodate DADT, which, looking back, I shouldn't have had to do. I've since come out to some of my fellow shipmates, none of whom have responded negatively.

Were you ever suspected to be gay by your shipmates? Did you experience or witness any outward homophobia?

There were never any suspicions outside of jest. I was fiercely defensive of my personal life while at work, so any suspicions would have only been based on a lack of knowledge of what I did with my time outside of work, and why I never had a girlfriend. Essentially, I had isolated myself in that sense, which didn't help to make me a fully integrated member of the team like others were.

When we first started dating, you knew that I was a journalist who published articles—including some rather controversial opinion pieces on gay issues, one of them the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy—in GLBT and mainstream publications across the country. Were you ever worried that your romantic involvement with me would somehow be discovered because of my work within the press?

At first, but only because I hadn't built the trust and confidence in you and your profession that I needed to be completely comfortable with our relationship as it related to being in the military. However, it didn't take long for me to realize that the articles you write and the way in which you do write them are of the highest integrity. I came to trust that you would never divulge my identity unless I said it was OK.

How did you reconcile the potential outcome?

Given the nature of our relationship, in that we were dating long distance at first, I just didn't think it was likely that I'd be caught. Had we lived closer or together, I'm sure it would have been harder, which would have played a big part in my decision to leave active duty.

Just before you chose to end active-duty service in the Navy, your superiors offered you a salary increase and a

YES, I'VE INTERVIEWED SOME OF THE MOST INTERESTING PEOPLE ALIVE—BUT NONE OF THEM COMPARE TO THIS INTERVIEW WITH MY OWN FIANCE.

new assignment in Annapolis. That presented a problem, because, at the time, I was living in Baltimore, which meant that we would be closer together, setting up a new set of obstacles. Why did you decline that position?

I would have loved to accept that position, but I realized that I loved you more, and it just wouldn't have worked for us to be that close together, especially because I expected that we'd move in together. This is exactly the inherent flaw in DADT, which is that it forces gays and lesbians in the military to choose between their professional and personal lives. As a result, many of us choose the latter, realizing that we can be just as successful, and have a positive influence in the civilian world, without having to put up with such a policy. Looking back, even though I would have loved the job, and been great at it, I don't regret my decision at all, as I'm confident that I'm better off for it, and that it's the Navy's loss.

You recently participated in an off-camera interview for the upcoming documentary film *Out of Annapolis*. What did you discuss in the interview, and why did you choose to do it off-camera?

I discussed with the director, Steve Clark Hall, what it was like for me as a gay man aboard a submarine. I shared with him that I don't think our sailors would have the problem with openly homosexual crew members as some would lead you to believe. The reason I did the interview off-camera is primarily because that's what the director required for those of us that wanted to participate, but are still in either the regular or reserve Navy.

Are you afraid of the consequences of DADT now that you've publicly taken a stand against the policy?

Not anymore. I used to be, but in light of recent events, I just can't stand by, and not do whatever I can to help all gays and lesbians gain the right to be able to serve openly, which is something that I would have liked for myself.

As someone who entered military service knowing the consequences, do you think it's fair for the institution to discharge you based on the provisions of DADT?

I don't think that it's fair at all for the military to discharge anyone based on their sexual orientation. The measure of a sailor, soldier, Marine, etc., should be based on the quality of their performance, not their sexuality. I am like many others who were deemed more than competent, and proved to be real assets to our units. I just can't understand why we have a policy that forces us out involuntarily, or to make the decision to leave, like I did.

Do you think a repeal will happen? What political and social obstacles do you think a bill to repeal the policy

will encounter?

I'm confident that Congress will ultimately do the right thing. I see the major obstacles as all political. Unfortunately, there are still several of our legislators that just don't get it. They refuse to recognize the reality of the fact that this won't have the impact they fear. I've heard comments of the repeal having an effect on unit cohesion and military readiness. I think that couldn't be farther from the truth, as the current policy is what breaks these things down. Socially, I agree with Admiral Mullen's comment "that the great young men and women of our military can and would accommodate such a change."

How do you feel when members of Congress and other leaders of this country speak out against allowing gays and lesbians to serve their country openly? Do you ever feel that your commitment to the United States—and your protection of its freedom—is undermined and unappreciated?

I feel both undermined and unappreciated in the sense that it's only good enough for them that I serve as long as I keep quiet about my sexuality. If they truly understood or cared, they would appreciate me for more than just my service, like who I am as a person. It's even more distressing for me when individuals like Senator John McCain, who served so valiantly, say these things.

How do you think a repeal of the policy will be handled by the rank and file? Do you foresee increased instances of hate crimes and homophobia, or will the transition be made without incident?

I think that many people are underestimating our rank-and-file. Part of being in the military is being flexible and accommodating. All of us do this every day, and I don't think a repeal of DADT would be any different.

If DADT is repealed, would you consider a return to active-duty service?

No. The Navy lost out on me two years ago, when my military career was irreconcilable with my personal life because of this discriminatory policy. At that point, I pursued other civilian opportunities, and have found everything I was looking for. I've developed a new loyalty to my profession that balances with my love for you. No one I work with now would ever question that. That's all any of us want, and even with a repeal of DADT, I'm past going back. I love my country, value my service, and would do it again if time were rolled back. However, I've moved on. ■

Mikey Rox, an award-winning journalist, is the principal of Paper Rox Scissors, a media and marketing company in New York City. For more information, visit <www.paperroxscissors.com>.

REGARDING THE MILITARY'S DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL POLICY, MORROW HAS MADE THE BRAVE CHOICE TO SPEAK OUT AND SHARE HIS STORY.

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BACKTALK ♦ BUSINESS PROFILE



SOS HOMECARE

Living in a vintage home presents its challenges. Our lifestyles have changed so rapidly over the past century that those charming (but small) kitchens and bathrooms may have a negative impact on your daily life.

If your home isn't able to accommodate your needs, a remodel may be in order. That said, most homeowners would prefer to honor their home's unique architecture, while enjoying a more functional and energy-efficient kitchen, for example. That requires an experienced remodeling company.

SOS Homecare has been in business for more than 20 years. Working with vintage, inner-city homes is its specialty.

Cofounder Lee Switzenberg says, "Understanding the architecture and understanding how an older home is put together gives us a heads-up compared to someone who's used to working in Eagan with another kind of home. We're vintage-house experts at this point in our lives."

Kitchens and bathrooms are SOS Homecare's favorite projects, but it also will tackle construction and framing; decks and patios; tiling; brick and concrete work; windows and door replacement; outdoor lighting; landscaping; and siding and trim work.

For the breadth of work that they do, cofounder Todd Oberg and Switzenberg believe in keeping their company small, placing a high priority on customer service.

Switzenberg explains, "We will help our customers from beginning to end, and try

to make it a really enjoyable experience for everybody."

It was also important to both founders to cater to the gay community. Currently, GLBT customers are about 50 percent of their business.

Switzenberg shares, "We are gay. These days, it doesn't seem to matter, but that's one of the reasons we got involved in this 20 years ago. People were really uncomfortable just having anybody come into their house. We're easy to get along with in those regards."

It may seem like a small point, but having contractors you get along with really can make a project run more smoothly. In fact, Switzenberg feels it may be one of the most important aspects of choosing a remodeling company, next to proper licensing and experience.

Switzenberg remarks, "I know that sounds really odd, but when I first started my business years ago, I thought there were good customers and bad customers. And I know now there are only good customers, but some people work better with some kinds of people!" **HEIDI FELLNER**

Name of Company: SOS Homecare Inc.

Year Founded: In business more than 20 years

President/CEO: Todd Oberg

Number of Employees: 2 full-time, 1 part-time

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CALENDAR

DECEMBER/JANUARY

17

Friday, December

CHRISTMAS WITH CANTUS. From timeless classical works to new arrangements of favorite tunes, Cantus mines the treasures of Christmas to bring the beautiful sounds of the holidays to Twin Cities audiences. The nine-member ensemble will sing carols, pop standards, and a new premiere piece in *Christmas With Cantus*. New to the Christmas repertoire are a world premiere of "O Magnum Mysterium" by Brian Schmidt; "Do You Hear What I Hear"; Rachmaninoff's "Pridite"; and "E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come" from Cantus's new CD, *That Eternal Day*. 7:30 AM. St. Bartholomew's Catholic Church, 630 Wayzata Blvd. E., Wayzata. Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1200 Marquette Ave., Mpls. [612] 435-0055. <www.cantusonline.org>.

ELLIS'S HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE CONCERT. Nationally-touring singer-songwriter Ellis repeatedly has been voted Best Local Musician by *Lavender* readers. She invites you to her 7th-annual Holiday Food Drive Concert, a music-filled evening to help out needy Twin Cities residents of the Twin Cities. The concert usually sells out, so buy tickets in advance, and arrive early to get a seat. 8 PM. Ginkgo Coffeehouse, 721 N. Snelling Ave., St. Paul. <www.ellis-music.com>.

21

Tuesday, December

CHRISTMAS WITH CANTUS. From timeless classical works to new arrangements of favorite tunes, Cantus mines the treasures of Christmas to bring the beautiful sounds of the holidays to Twin Cities audiences. The nine-member ensemble will sing carols, pop standards, and a new premiere piece in *Christmas With Cantus*. New to the Christmas repertoire are a world premiere of "O Magnum Mysterium" by Brian

Schmidt; "Do You Hear What I Hear"; Rachmaninoff's "Pridite"; and "E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come" from Cantus's new CD, *That Eternal Day*. 7:30 AM. St. Bartholomew's Catholic Church, 630 Wayzata Blvd. E., Wayzata. Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1200 Marquette Ave., Mpls. [612] 435-0055. <www.cantusonline.org>.

22

Wednesday, December

CHRISTMAS WITH CANTUS. From timeless classical works to new arrangements of favorite tunes, Cantus mines the treasures of Christmas to bring the beautiful sounds of the holidays to Twin Cities audiences. The nine-member ensemble will sing carols, pop standards, and a new premiere piece in *Christmas With Cantus*. New to the Christmas repertoire are a world premiere of "O Magnum Mysterium" by Brian Schmidt; "Do You Hear What I Hear"; Rachmaninoff's "Pridite"; and "E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come" from Cantus's new CD, *That Eternal Day*. 10:30 AM. Chapel of St. Thomas Aquinas, 2115 Summit Ave., St. Paul. [612] 435-0055. <www.cantusonline.org>.

2

Sunday, January

TRICK HORIZONS: NEW WORK BY DAVID WHANNEL. Influenced by the ordinary, surreal aspects of everyday objects, maximalist artist Whannel will use just about anything in his paintings and drawings to add interest and layers. Push and pull, inside out, jets streaming off the edge, little safe areas, bold colors, texture, funny stuff, vibrating edges, distorted perspective with collage create a truly unique experience in each picture. Whannel doesn't consider himself an abstract artist—rather he's a fan of art. He believes there are no mistakes, just opportunity to improve

and to further an image. This causes most pictures to be layered heavily with paper, objects, and paint. In fact, he considers white glue and scissors as his most valuable tools. What ends up being "behind" becomes just as important to the finished product as the foreground. When complete, a picture should be a total experience for all the senses. Opening reception Jan. 7, 7-11 PM. Through Jan. 30. Rosalux Gallery, 1224 2nd St. NE, Mpls. [612] 703-5785. <www.rosaluxgallery.com>.



Courtesy of David Whannel

ONGOING

2 PIANOS, 4 HANDS. This production brings fabulous music, hilarious one-liners, and razor-sharp insights into the world of competition for the holiday season. Two actors, playing grand pianos and multiple roles, grace the stage, as the story of two piano whiz kids unfolds. Through Jan. 2. Park Square Theatre, 20 W. 7th PL., St. Paul. [651] 291-7005. <www.parksquaretheatre.org>.

BINGO BONANZA FOR THE HOLIDAYS. Start the holiday season off right with Miss Richfield 1981's 2010 holiday show, *Bingo Bonanza for the Holidays*. The audience gets to play, as Miss R calls three rounds of bingo for her favorite charity, plus discusses her latest travels, appropriate dress, and other vital matters. Through Dec. 19. Illusion Theater, 528 Hennepin Ave., Mpls. [612] 339-4944. <www.illusiontheater.org>.

BRETT FAVRE'S CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR II: THE SECOND COMING. Break from the family fumbles of the holiday season, and cheer as the all-star holiday lineup takes the field for *Brett Favre's Christmas Spectacular II: The Second Coming*. Brave New Workshop spike the holiday season with seasonal favorites, plus all-new sketches and songs, to leave audiences laughing through the New Year. Through Jan. 29. Brave New Workshop, 2605 Hen-

nepin Ave. S., Mpls. [612] 332-6620. <www.bravenewworkshop.com>.

THE CHRISTMAS SCHOONER. Written by John Reeger, with music and lyrics by Julie Shannon, it's the true story of the Christmas Tree Ships that sailed on Lake Michigan to bring evergreens to the people of Chicago in the late 1800s. Beautiful songs and joyful dances performed by the 15-person ensemble make this retelling a warm family entertainment for the holiday season. Through Dec. 19. The History Theatre, 30 E. 10th St., St. Paul. [651] 292-4323. <www.historytheatre.com>.

FULL CIRCLE. It's a two-person exhibition of painting by Jim Dryden and ceramic installation by Kathy Wismar. Dryden's work explores themes of partnership, relationship, and intimacy in which circular motifs reference a sense of connection and continuity. Hand-built or thrown on a wheel, Kathy Wismar's unique pieces acknowledge the past, while reaching into the future. Through Jan. 10. Opening reception Dec. 11. Traffic Zone Gallery, 250 3rd Ave. N., Mpls. [651] 592-1841. <www.trafficzoneart.com>.

JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICAL DREAMCOAT. You are what you dream. Enjoy this perennially-popular production, with lyrics by Tim Rice and music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. It features *American Idol* finalist Anthony Federov, along with a cast of 80, including 50 local children. Through Jan. 2. Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, 345 Washington St., St. Paul. [651] 224-4222. <www.ordway.org>.

TRETTER COLLECTION 10TH ANNIVERSARY EXHIBIT. Celebrating the 10th anniversary of the internationally-acclaimed Tretter Collection in GLBT Studies at the University of Minnesota, an exhibit, *Saving Our Lives*, runs through February 5. University of Minnesota, Elmer L. Andersen Library. <http://z.umn.edu/tretterevents>.

TRIPLE ESPRESSO. It's the irresistible story of a comedy trio going for their big break, only to have their hopes dashed over and over on the rocks of one magnificently funny failure after another. Hugh, Buzz, and Bobby reunite for a hilarious evening of music, magic, and megalauls in this audience favorite that appeals to everyone from age 6 to 106. It's a perfect group outing. Through Jan. 9. Music Box Theatre, 1407 Nicollet Ave., Mpls. [612] 424-1407. <www.musicboxtheatre.org>.

For additional calendar events, visit <www.LavenderMagazine.com>.

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Take My Civil-Unionized Partner, Please

We were driving down a country road in the Lake District of England, when one of my British friends spotted a sign that pointed the way to the remains of an Ancient Roman bath.

"Oooh, let's stop!" Jayne trilled. "I adore ruins."

"That's why you married one!" I called out from the backseat, delighted as always when I make a clever remark in the moment. Usually, these come hours later, well after the statute of limitations has expired for a witty retort.

Jude, Jayne's "wife," grumbled from the driver's seat, "We're *not* married."

The British gays have civil unions, not marriage.

"Well, it's not as funny to say, 'That's why, you civil-unionized one,'" I responded, quite sensibly.

That, my friends, is the main reason I think gays should be able to marry—because it's funnier than getting civil-unionized.

"Take my wife, please!"

"I take my wife everywhere, but she always finds her way back."

These classic jokes would lose so much punch if we were forced to replace "wife" with "civil-union partner."

For years, I've been ambivalent about gay marriage.

In the plus column for marriage:

- It would cause many Republicans to explode. I mean that literally. Gay marriage would pass, and Republicans would spontaneously-combust. It would be messy but fun.

- I'm intrigued by the idea of alimony—but only if it works in my favor.

- I always have found ball-and-chain imagery rather titillating.

In the minus column:

- Most married people don't have a lot of sex...or I should say that most married people don't have a lot of sex with each other. And I like sex. It's messy and fun, just like exploding Republicans.

- When you're married, you have to go to your wife's relatives on holidays. That would make my mother mad! When you're not married, you are not considered a fully realized grown-up, and thus, your middle-aged carcass is expected at your traditional place at the children's table at your parents' home for every holiday.

- The mere mention of the word "marriage" makes me clammy and claustrophobic. When it comes up in conversation, I immediately begin looking for an exit sign. Maybe it's because marriage is an institution

based on ownership, and I don't want to be anyone's chattel—unless, of course, I'm cast in that position as part of some type of role-playing sex romp. Then, I merrily will cede control of my personage, but only for a half-hour or so.

So, when news got to England on the tele-type that Illinois, the state where I was born and raised, passed civil unions for gays, I was both happy and sad. Hurray for the liberal-minded, no-nonsense, completely-corrupt-but-totally-loveable Illinois State Legislature for allowing gays to enter into a dreary bureaucratic contractual agreement! It was fantastic news, but not all that romantic.

I've been to civil union ceremonies in England. While it always is touching to watch friends in long, loving, committed relationships formally agree to stick it out together until one of them dies, the civil ceremony lacks the panache of a wedding. Basically, in such a service, you vow to be best pals, and you seal the deal with a firm handshake. Marriage is both more terrifying and, thus, more romantic.

So, while I really kind of hate marriage, I really kind of love it, too. Without it, we'd put a lot of old Jewish comedians out of business. With it, we'd get to watch Sarah Palin, the entire Bush family, and the new Speaker of the House (whose last name sounds suspiciously like an erect penis) explode in front of our eyes. **JENNIFER PARELLO**

TROLIN, UN DIABLITO ROSA



Chuik! Chuik!



Trolon wants me to enlarge my little tail.



He wants it bigger...



I prefer it small and playful rather than big and silly!

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Play's, Well, With Others

Recently, I celebrated the first birthday of my semiautobiographical play.

That's certainly no rare event in the Twin Cities, the undisputed world capital of unproduced, unasked-for, appallingly-bad, small-town-based play scripts.

But when I bought a birthday cake for my play, and decided to throw it a party, my friends reached for their therapists' business cards quicker than you can say "Fringe Festival."

Patiently, I explained to friends that my script was an extension of me, and that it was only fair I do something for it after the year it had been through.

For example, the first time I let a friend read it, she said she liked it, but wanted to see the main character die a horrible, painful death by the third page.

Undeterred by this "constructive criticism," I began sending the play around town, hoping some big-shot producer/artistic director (Joe Dowling of the Guthrie) would whip out his checkbook, and make me a very wealthy woman.

Instead, I received even more profound feedback from many of the Twin Cities's fine creative theater assistants, such as: "I fell asleep reading it"; "The stage manager's dog threw up on it"; and "How the hell did you get Joe Dowling's cell phone number?"

The topper was when one friend who read my script—a romantic drama about a suave Welshman and a strong woman falling hopelessly in love—told me he deeply suspected both characters were gay.

That night, I asked for the opinion of my best friend, Jeff. Frowning, he looked up from a *Cosmopolitan* quiz he was taking concerning the many shortcomings of a best friend.

Jeff said, "Well, I didn't think the characters were gay, but are you sure *you* don't



need to come out as a lesbian?"

This, of course, came as a rather stunning query (pardon the expression), and caused an acute identity crisis. Even worse, I also felt as if I'd failed as a writer. I contemplated cheerfully heaving my play off the Hennepin Avenue Bridge.

But when I arrived at the bridge, I found another playwright doing the same thing.

"Couldn't think of anything original, huh?" he sneered, as he fed to the fishes his action-adventure play about a sarcastic, wisecracking cop stuck on an escalator with a deranged gang-member from Anoka.

So, I kept my script, deciding that maybe it simply needed more love, attention, and—most importantly—a birthday party.

I ran straight to the nearest bakery, where, without even blushing, I asked the lady behind the counter what cake would be best for a play's birthday party.

"Something layered," she replied, without batting an eye.

Thrown, and in desperate need of any kind of attention, I asked if she thought it weird that I was throwing a party for my play's script.

"Honey," she said, "I just did a Bundt cake

for an actor celebrating the 11th anniversary of his audition for a Preparation H commercial—and he didn't even get the part."

Returning home with my layered cake, I tracked down a few agencies, and invited them to bring their scripts over for a little celebration.

After they arrived, we sat around like a bunch of old ladies talking about our grandchildren's achievements—or, in this case, the lack of them.

One friend, whose play will soon be 12, even pulled a photo from his wallet showing him and his script, which he had named Dennis, on vacation in Mexico.

"Dennis and I were celebrating out 17th rewrite," he said, getting misty-eyed.

Later, looking around the table at all our plays, each wearing a party hat, I experienced a tinge of pride that might have had something to do with the half-bottle of Wild Turkey I had just consumed.

Jeff sat patiently watching this spectacle unfold, as we playwrights traded war stories about how our scripts were conceived (interestingly, mostly on city buses); the nights our printers gave birth ("my DeskJet was in labor for eight hours"); and our scripts' first trip to Kinko's ("Dennis got stuck in the copier—it was so embarrassing").

Later, after everyone left, Jeff volunteered to vacuum up the mess, which amounted to pushing cake crumbs around with his very old Hoover. I reminded him that the vacuum had never been that great in the first place, and that Sears was probably having a sale.

"Not interested," he said. "I've had this vacuum since I was 23, and I'm going to have it when I'm 73."

Consider the source here, but I know how he feels.

Bye for now.

Kiss, kiss. **JULIE DAFYDD**

Adoring Fan

Dear Ms. Behavior:

I thank you for being funny as hell. I have been reading and rereading your etiquette guide ever since its publication.

I first found womyn through the personals, and then through the Womyn's Studies Department, so I am thoroughly saturated with Cris Williamson, Holly Near, and the desire to act as I really feel.

The concept of playing games seems like irritating social crap. However, my straight cycling buddy has told me over and over that if I want to hold the attention of the amazon I recently started adoring, I must back off, and feign at least some noninterest.

Aside from just wanting to devour a womyn who is taller than me (this never has occurred in my entire dating history, as I am tall myself), I have a strong anti-BS clause in my makeup, and I find it difficult.

The two of us seem similarly calibrated. My desire to text her lovely haiku throughout the day is strong. I do realize it may be that pesky beginning stage where all you can

see are blue skies. It is possible that some weird monster will crawl out from the cracks, and explain that she is not even available.

In any case, I am finding it difficult to understand how I should conduct myself. Furthermore, I am plagued by a notion that she is some kind of karmic retribution for every lover I have hurt, and will smash my heart into a million pieces.

I am ridiculously smitten. She has bicycle-racing scars. She served me arugula for dinner. I am in a constant swoon. I wish I were joking even a little bit.

Thanks for cracking me up repeatedly in the meantime.

Your Adoring Fan,
—GWENDOLYN

Dear Gwendolyn:

It's interesting that you would you rely on your straight cycling buddy for advice about holding the attention of the amazon. Unless you believe your straight friend's knowledge of gear mechanisms and bicycle seats is a

useful metaphor for lesbian love, the source of your love advice thus far has been strange.

If you left some vital piece of information out of your letter—if for example, your straight friend's advice is based on prior knowledge that you are prone to mortifying expressions of love—then, OK, fine, perhaps your friend is trying to tone you down to save you.

However, the term "straight cycling buddy" implies a certain distance. This is all by way of saying that you finally have come to the right place for your love guidance.

You wonder if you must back off, and feign noninterest, when you'd rather text lovely haikus.

But if you and the appealing amazon are "similarly calibrated," as you suggest, how would game-playing help?

Your romantic inclinations surely would fell most tall lesbians. And those who'd respond with disdain probably aren't right for you anyway.

As for your desire to "devour" the tall woman, from Ms. Behavior's 5'10" perspec-

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tive, few women are large enough for the task, so it seems likely that your amazon will be tickled by your enthusiasm (and your teeth).

Of course there is a difference between expressing interest and acting like a sticky booger. If you truly are inclined to the latter, you can contain your behavior slightly, without going to an extreme of avoidance or feigning disinterest. In any case, lots of women appreciate romantic gestures.

But why do some people get away with Grand Romantic Gestures, and others look like fools for their amorous displays of enthusiasm?

Some of it depends on your delivery, and some on your reading of social cues—e.g., how the object of your affection feels about you.

For example, if you sneak into your beloved's apartment, and sprinkle dozens of rose petals on her bed, will you look like a romantic genius or a psychotic stalker?

If you don't know the answer, it's better not to do it.

In general, avoid Grand Romantic Gestures under the following circumstances:

- (1) If they involve forced entry.
- (2) When the object of your affection doesn't know you exist.
- (3) When she has a girlfriend.

Otherwise, try it, and see how it goes.

When you say that you fear that this woman could be "karmic retribution for every woman you have hurt," it sounds like you might need to make amends to a few (dozen) women.

If that's not possible, at least try to come to peace with your past, so that it doesn't interfere with your ability to have a healthy relationship in the present.

MERYL COHN

© 2010 Meryl Cohn. Address questions and correspondence to <msbehavior@aol.com>. She is the author of Do What I Say: Ms. Behavior's Guide to Gay and Lesbian Etiquette (Houghton Mifflin). Signed copies are available directly from the author.

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